

# Opt-In Overkill

By David Barrett

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If you're in business online, then you probably already know how important it is to build your own opt-in mailing list. When a subscriber opts-in to your list, they are giving you permission to send them email. That doesn't mean you should send email after email after email without discretion. It's just as important not to abuse your privileges.

I often wonder why some opt-in list owners feel it's necessary to bombard their subscribers with a deluge of email. I know of some list owners who send out as many as ten emails in a single day! To me, this seems excessive. Sure, we all know that opt-in advertising is by far the most effective, but by flooding your subscriber's inbox with email, you run the risk of alienating or angering them. At best they'll only unsubscribe; at worst they'll report you for spamming.

Spam is a big enough problem as it is. Don't add to it by over emailing to your subscribers. Just because they've opted-in to your list doesn't give you a license to send email at will. There's an old saying that goes, "Just because you CAN do something, doesn't mean that you SHOULD."

Don't let greed get in the way of common sense. Sure, you can make a ton of money selling solo ads and classifieds to send out to your list, but what good is it if you just end up making them mad? There's another old saying; "Don't bite the hand that feeds you."

The last thing you want to do is turn off your subscribers. Unless you've discovered some kind of "magic bullet" for recruiting new subscribers, it's probably taken you a long time to build your list. Your goal is to constantly add

new subscribers, not lose the ones you already have.

If you over-market, your subscribers will just delete your emails without even opening them. What good does that do? Your advertisers will stop advertising if your list is ineffective, and your subscribers will just opt-out if you send too many emails. Ultimately, you'll end up with no advertisers and no subscribers.

I'm not saying you shouldn't market to your list, or sell solo or classified ads. What I am saying is don't sell so many that you're flooding your subscriber's inbox with a lot of unwanted ads. That's the sort of thing that gives marketers a bad name. A reasonable amount, say two or three solo ads a week plus your newsletter, is ok. Five or ten emails a day is overkill.

It seems as though some list owners have forgotten the Golden Rule of marketing; treat your subscribers with respect, and they'll reward you by being loyal customers. This seems like such a simple concept, yet I'm still amazed at how many online marketers ignore this basic principle.

Opt-in email marketing can be a virtual gold mine if it's done responsibly. When you only send a limited amount of email, it is perceived as much more valuable. Be selective about what and how often you advertise, and your subscribers will come to expect only quality products from you. Your email will stand a much better chance of actually being read, your advertisers will get a much higher response, and you'll earn a reputation as a high-quality list owner.

Remember, your subscribers will only stay on your list if they are happy with what you have to offer them. If you upset them by sending too many emails, or offer any old thing just because someone paid for an ad, you run the risk of sabotaging your reputation and your list. In the end, it's up to you to decide how much is too much.

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